On 17th November, 1916, a series of Regulations for the control of food supplies was published. The Board of Trade was authorised to make orders for imposing the most drastic restrictions in respect of food consumption.

Penalties were laid down for resistance to orders of the Board of Trade made under these regulations.

Next day the Board of Trade made two orders, fixing maximum prices for milk and laying down the percentages of flour that must be milled from different qualities of wheat. The Board also made an order prohibiting the use of wheat for brewing, since on account of a shortage of barley, brewers were buying wheat in its place. But any systematic exercise of the further powers acquired by the Government through these regulations was possible only when the Food Controller had been appointed. As I have already shown, that appointment was made when the new Government was formed in December, 1916.

As soon as Lord Devonport, the new Food Controller, took office, he appointed a Committee to study the question of rationing, under the chairmanship of Mr. (now Sir Alfred) Butt, to whose intelligent handling of this troublesome duty we owe a good deal.

In three weeks' time this Committee prepared a detailed plan for rationing the food of the nation.

First food control orders

Sir Alfred Butt's rationing scheme

It was practically the scheme that was put into operation later on by Lord Rhondda. It was drawn up on the assumption that sooner or later rationing might have to be made compulsory. For the time being, the Cabinet considered it necessary to hold the scheme in reserve. We recognised